

**240520 10am St John's Church, Kenilworth  
(The Lord's) Prayer. Luke 11:1-13**

It's great that you could join us to study God's word together.  
We're going to be looking at [Luke 11:1-13](#).

In the past few weeks, we have been looking at God wanting to be present with us. You remember last week we did this: we made a tent. This is my one which is decorated and thank you to have you sent me one as well. It's to remind us that God wants to be present with us. And we've also talked about how we can 'go deeper' with Him in our relationship with Him. Relationship is important.

I know that lockdown has been very difficult for some people. It's hard when you can't be with people and do the things you want to do.

One of the things I've enjoyed while we've been on lockdown is our evening walks. Steve and I leave the house after work and head out for places in and around Kenilworth. We've discovered places that we didn't know existed before and have enjoyed some of the beautiful countryside – and have burnt off a few calories at the same time.

But, we've also enjoyed each other's company. We've chatted about all sorts of things as we've wandered around together. It reminded me of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day with Adam and Eve. Admittedly they were hiding from Him when it's recorded, but it does suggest that He walked with them in the cool of the day on previous occasions – He spent time with them... and He desires that our relationship with Him is restored and that we can again talk to Him.

In John 1, we read how 'The word became flesh and "pitched His tent" among us, and how God spoke to Moses face to face – and to Elijah in a still, small voice.

Today's topic is '**Prayer**', which is – to break it down to its bare bones – just **God and me chatting together**.

Since the pandemic started, many people have googled 'Prayer' and 'How to pray' because they are anxious, they want to know where God is in all of this. Church attendance online seems greater now than it was before we were all separated. But people don't know how to pray. Are there specific words you need to use? How do I address God? Am I allowed to pray for my own needs? Do I need to kneel down? ... Part of the problem we've had as a Church is being to communicate well with each other – we have all sorts of things on-line, but some people can't join in because they're not on the internet.

To put it simply, prayer is communicating with God.... and everyone can join in with that.

In years gone by, we all had to put our hands together, close our eyes to recite prayers at school and Sunday School – and we said grace before meals and prayed at bedtime.

I suppose that's why people are looking up prayer on-line now, because they want to communicate with God, but don't know how.

We live in a post-Christian society and people are not taught how to pray any more – unless they live in a Christian family.

And I think that our posture affects the way we come into God's presence. Being in a Church Building, kneeling or lying down, raising our hands and so on all help us focus, but we can communicate with God wherever we are and whatever we're doing.

There are questions like "What happens if I don't feel like it?" "Why doesn't God answer?" and so on.

There are many books, online devotionals and courses on the subject – one I've found useful is the [Prayer Course](#). Also, [Lectio365](#) and they take you through all different sorts of prayer and how to pray and they even play music while you're doing it. So do look them up if you think they will help.

While I was writing this talk, I was listening to some worship music – and it struck me that most of the songs are prayers – some are praising God for who He is, some are asking for Him to come near to them – even 'Come, Holy Spirit' is a prayer.

*In October 1962, there was a stand-off between President Kennedy of the United States and Premier Khrushchev of the Soviet Union over planting missiles in Cuba. The Cuban Missile Crisis was probably the closest we have ever been to World War III, but it was averted because communication was established.*

*In the days before mobile phones and contemporary ways of instant messaging, it was decided to put one red telephone on the desk of the President of the United States, and another on the desk of the Premier of Soviet Russia. The communication link was called the 'hotline'. If at any time there was a danger of misunderstanding they could simply lift up the phone and communicate.*

Communication is vital to all our relationships. Setting aside time to build and nurture communication is essential. Jesus has given you a 'hotline' to God, but it is not just for emergency use – it is to be used all the time.

So, the disciples asked Jesus

*'Teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples'*

John the Baptist was the one who prepared the way for Jesus and announced that 'The Lamb of God' or the Messiah had come. Andrew (and probably a few of the other disciples of Jesus) were disciples of John first, so – they would have known the prayer (or prayers) John had taught them to pray, but they wanted one from Jesus.

The disciples were Jewish, so they would have known the set prayers that the Jews used.... There were different prayers for different occasions. One of the set prayers – the Kaddish – is the one that Jesus seems to have used as the basis for the prayer He

teaches them here in Luke 11. Rabbis would all have had their own personal prayers, which would relate to who they were and what they were trying to teach.

The words Jesus shares relate to the coming Messiah (Your Kingdom Come, Your will be done on earth as in Heaven)... but they also teach us quite a lot about what Jesus wanted to say.

There is a similar passage in [Matthew 6:5-15](#) which also gives us a bit more information about our attitude to prayer.

[Matthew 6:5-6](#) tells us not to make a big show of what we're doing. It's just between us and God, so we should find a quiet place where we can speak to Him, rather than making a point of letting everyone watch us, so that they will think we're really pious... ' *but when you pray, go to your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen*' We don't need to use any fancy language, or put on our 'prayer voice', we can just talk to Him – or listen to Him – as prayer is a 2-way conversation.

Matthew also tells us not to 'keep on babbling like the pagans'.

There's no point in just reciting a load of words if we don't understand what they mean and if we don't mean what we say.

God wants us to be authentic and to talk to Him as we would to our own father.

I'm not one for a lot of liturgy and set prayers that have been written down in advance. I remember reciting prayers in school assembly and not really taking much notice of the words.... but – if you have no other words to say, why not use the words of a set prayer or a song? If you are in despair and want to reach out to God, but don't know how – start with one of those prayers – and then speak to God through that. I don't think that's necessarily babbling like a pagan – it only becomes that when we're just reciting words as some sort of mantra. I know that for people with mental health problems, set prayers and songs that were learnt in their youth are often a great comfort.

The words of this prayer in Luke 11 have so much truth in them – yet some people just pray these words without thought. It's an easy-to-learn, poetic prayer – but don't necessarily stop there – use it to speak to God from your heart.

Matthew reminds us that God knows what we need before we ask Him. If that's true, then why do we need to pray at all? I hear you ask.... well, I don't really know why prayer works that way, but it's polite to ask – and we are encouraged to do so. and our prayers really do have an effect.

We are asked to pray for those in authority, to pray without ceasing – and sometimes we just want to have a good rant at God like David did in some of the psalms – that's OK. He can take our rants.

So, let's look at the actual prayer that Jesus suggests here and see what that teaches us about how to pray.

I'm sure you noticed while Emily was reading to us, she was adding bits and so the actual verses that she read have got footnotes, which say you could include this, you could include that. So I'm going to go with the traditional version with bits included, that could be included. So the first bit is,

## Our Father in Heaven.

The Jews would have known about the concept of God being like a father, but might have thought that Jesus should start with something like 'O Mighty and most powerful God', but He uses the word 'Abba', which means 'daddy'.

We need to recognise who it is that we're addressing when we pray. This IS to God Almighty – and No – it's not OK to pray to other gods, but that's a different subject – but Jesus is making God more accessible – like our own earthly fathers.

Some people haven't had such a good relationship with their earthly fathers, but I'm sure they can grasp the concept of a father wanting the best for his children, and God is

**'Father in Heaven'** - the most perfect Father – providing for us, nurturing, teaching us the right way to live, loving us, passing on knowledge we will need – that's the relationship God wants with us. He is asking us to acknowledge that we want to be His children.

We can only be His children if we *'receive Him and believe in His name'* (John 1v12). That's an important prayer to pray so that we can be part of this relationship with God. We can't just 'barge in' and expect Him to listen if we don't even know Him... So – apart from just crying out something like 'God, show me that you're there', this is how we should come into His presence first of all.

How do we do that?

It's as easy as ABC:

**A – Accept** that He died for your sins and accept His free gift of eternal Life,

**B – Believe** that His sacrifice on the cross and his being raised to life again is the only way to have our sins forgiven and

**C – Commit** your life to Him, **confessing** Jesus as Lord. Just talk to God and tell Him that's what you want to do. Thank Him for what He has done, confess your sins to Him and ask Him to fill you with His Holy Spirit.

*I think it's important that – if you have made that prayer of commitment, you should tell someone else – that will make it more real and will be the start of you sharing the Good News of Jesus with others.*

We're going to take a little bit of time now for you to pray that prayer if you want to.

[Pause]

Amen.

There are prayers of commitment you can use if you don't know what to say – but the best way is to just tell Him – so if you did pray that prayer then don't forget about it later on – pray it again later, so that you can really enter into a relationship with God.

The idea of God being a parent to us reminds me of the great privilege I have had, being brought up in a Christian home and being taught all about God from a very early age. If we are parents, we have the responsibility to pass on the truth about Jesus to our children and to teach them to pray.

I remember a song from my childhood which went '**Read your Bible, pray every day if you want to grow**' and that's so true. We can't expect someone else – the school / Sunday school or whoever – to teach our children. We are the ones who have a relationship with our children and we need to share with them how they can have life in all its fullness. I know my kids probably despaired of me sitting them down for Bible time each day – but, hopefully, it has given them a good foundation on which they can build their lives – one where they know they can come to their Heavenly Father with their thoughts and problems – and they know that God will hear them.

The next bit is:

### **Hallowed be Your Name**

What does Hallowed mean? It means Honoured / magnified / made holy

To many, God is just a swear word. In ancient Israel, the name of God Yahweh or Jehovah was too holy to even mention – they didn't even write it down with the vowels in it. So it's just YHWH or YHVH or whatever.

The Kaddish, the prayer I mentioned earlier, begins - "Magnified and sanctified be **His Great Name**,"

God cares about His reputation, about keeping His promises, especially to Israel. But He makes it clear that the reason He keeps His promises is to protect **His reputation (His Name) as a holy**, righteous, promise keeper.

So, when we acknowledge that **YHWH (God's personal name)** is holy, we are reminding ourselves that He is the One to whom all glory and honour belong.

*'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty. Who was and is and is to come (Revelation 4:8)*

So, although God is Our Father, we should also remember that He is Almighty God and give Him the honour due to His name.

*Ascribe to the Lord, you heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.  
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;  
worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness.  
(Psalm 29:1-2)*

*Shout for joy to God, all the earth! Sing the glory of his name;  
make his praise glorious. Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! (Psalm 66)*

and many other Psalms has the Psalmist reminding himself to praise God, because it doesn't come naturally sometimes. Some of the songs also have David telling himself to shout out for joy because he doesn't want to. And that's a good example for us. Perhaps we don't want to. But as we praise God in our perception of him might change.

Do we represent YHWH (God) in our daily actions?

Do we give others glory and honour that belong to Him?

Do we always make His name holy among the people we interact with?

Not only is this part of the prayer reminding us to do that, but it can also be used to help us worship Him, to give Him adoration.

So the first part of this prayer is acknowledging who God is. That's before we've asked Him for anything.

We've come to Him in praise and adoration.

Then:

**Your Kingdom Come, Your will be done.**

As you may have seen in this week's updates, the '**Thy Kingdom Come**' Prayer initiative has started and will run up to Pentecost, which is next Sunday. This is one of the ways we can join in with others to pray for our nation.

So what are we asking here?

For God's way of doing things to happen here and now, so that His purposes can be fulfilled.

We can be part of what makes that happen.

In ancient Israel, there was no king. The idea was, that GOD was the king and that the people should follow Him. We probably all know what happened – as soon as Joshua had died, they turned their backs on Him and '*everyone did as they saw fit*' ([Judges 21:25](#))... this was a disaster and eventually, God let them have an earthly King, which was better than the anarchy that had happened, but it wasn't the ideal... God wants to be King / Lord of our lives. He wanted to be king of their lives but time and time again, they rebelled and went their own way. He wants us to follow His lead and do what He says, but we are like sheep who go astray (more on that later).

As we pray 'Your Kingdom Come', we're asking Him to help make His Kingdom come on earth. This isn't necessarily asking for God to intervene each time (although He can do that – and we should ask), but we may be part of the solution. What is He asking us to do to make our situation fit with what God wants?

We can also pray for God's help with those things we can't control, but we need to recognise the things we can... and to be obedient to what He says.

As I mentioned, praying together is very powerful.

There's an old saying that

'The devil trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees' and it says in James that *'the prayers of the righteous person are powerful and effective'* (James 5:16) which is true.

One person praying can make a world of difference.... but praying together not only encourages us to pray more, but there's something about being 'of one cause'.

*I'm sure you know that it's the 80th anniversary of the evacuation of our troops from the beaches of Dunkirk. You may have seen the recent movie – which is very good, but what it misses out is the power of prayer.*

*King George VI called a day of prayer for this very day in 1940 and thousands upon thousands, millions of people in the UK were lining up to go into Church buildings to pray and were praying in their homes for their loved ones to be rescued... and as history shows, amazing things happened – The Germans stopped their attack and headed for southern Europe, there was a storm at Flanders, so the German Air force couldn't take off, the sea at Dunkirk was calm, like a millpond, but it was foggy, so the aeroplanes couldn't see – ideal conditions for a rescue... and people weren't hit by German bullets, Some died – they expected only 30,000 people to be saved, but 338,226 were evacuated.*

*That's the power of prayer.*

*It involved the bravery, courage and selflessness of many people – those who used their own boats, the soldiers, the French – they were all part in making this happen – but God so obviously intervened.*

*Emma posted a [video](#) of this on WhatsApp on Friday and it's now on our Facebook page – the guy telling the story says that's what happened when our nation humbled itself, got on its knees and called to the Lord Most High'*

*He was quoting 2 Chronicles 7:14*

*The context was the consecration of the temple in Jerusalem*

*"... if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."*

Is that what God is calling us to do about this pandemic?

Or is the pandemic part of God's plan? I don't know – but it wouldn't harm us to pray – and perhaps pray as a Church, or a nation.

We often don't know how to pray 'Your will be done'. We don't know what His will is – but if we spend time with Him 'in the cool of the day' or even first thing in the morning or any other time – we will learn to know His character more, our prayers will be in line with what He wants.

If we pray IN THE NAME of Jesus, that means – going back to the 'Hallowed be your name' bit – that He wants His name to be glorified, which He will do, but would like us to be part of that as well. He wants to give us the blessings of joining in.



The Bible is full of people wanting God's name to be honoured. From Abraham pleading with God, to David – a man after God's own heart, to Jehoshaphat calling the nation to pray (2 Chronicles 20) and praising God when the enemy is defeated, and Paul praying and singing in a Philippian jail, Hannah pleading for a son, Samuel in the temple listening to God... God acts to uphold His name and to see His Kingdom Come on Earth.

The people of faith, mentioned in Hebrews 11, were those who cried out to God and also LISTENED to Him when He spoke and did what He said.

We don't have time now to discuss how we know what God's will is, how we understand when our prayers seem to go unanswered, but our prayers that His name will be honoured and that His Kingdom will come and His will be done is something we can pray each day.

We need to spend time daily with God. Jesus did... he was always going off to solitary places to pray – if he needed to do this – we certainly do...

### **Give us this day our Daily Bread**

When we have focused our hearts and minds on God, then we can start to pray from a place that's more likely to be in tune with His will.

The Lectio365 App gives daily devotions and creates a quiet space for people to pray. They introduce each time of prayer with

*“As I turn to prayer now, I pause to be still, to breathe slowly and to focus my scattered senses on the presence of God.”*

God DOES answer our arrow prayers and they're sometimes appropriate but – as I said at the beginning, He wants a relationship with us, He wants us to focus on the job in hand. It's like sitting on his lap and asking rather than shouting through the window.

**Daily Bread** is what we need each day- not necessarily what we want – and spending time coming to Him in praise and adoration and preparing ourselves to be in the same frame of mind as God, will change what we ask for.

It's related to waiting to see His Kingdom Come and His will be done.

In **Mark 11:24** says,

***<sup>24</sup> Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.***

But we need to pray from a place where we are in tune with what God wants.

He does want to answer our prayers, but sometimes He says “No”, or “wait”



**Intercession (praying for other people)** is so important. Sometimes people are in too dark a place to pray on their own – and we can help by upholding them.

I'm useless at this and often forget to pray even though I said yes, I'll pray for you. So we need [to be disciplined when we pray for others and] to write down things. When then we can look back and see how God's answered our prayers. – and it's so important to say thank you afterwards, [when we see God's answers to our prayer] (just like the one leper did when Jesus healed him – and not like the other 9.)

God loves you. He knows what you need and He is the great provider, so Ask.

Later in the passage, Luke 11:9, we're told to

Ask – and it will be given to you

Seek – and you will find

Knock – and the door will be opened to you.

We're told to be persistent in prayer – there's the story in v 5-8 about someone getting out of bed and giving his friend bread because of his boldness or persistence - and there's the story of the persistent widow in Luke 18:1-8... Pete Greig likens each prayer to a domino in a stack, then there's a breakthrough and the whole lot come tumbling down.

*[Incidentally, the Prayer Course is a brilliant way of exploring Prayer. It looks at all the things I've mentioned but don't have time to cover here – if you look up*

*ThePrayerCourse.org, you'll find all the information you need – and maybe you could use it to help you pray]*

And verses 11-13 is probably one of these jokes Jesus said (that doesn't translate very well) to make people remember. Even earthly Fathers wouldn't give their son snake if he asked for a fish, or a scorpion instead of an egg – so how much more will God give you ... the HOLY SPIRIT if you ask Him... there's a twist – we'll probably hear more about asking for the Holy Spirit next week, at Pentecost – but it's always a good time to pray, "Come, Holy Spirit" and to wait – God loves You. He wants what is best for you, so don't be afraid to pour out your heart to Him. If you continue in prayer for something that isn't what HE wants, He will change the way you pray over time, but ask anyway. He can say Yes, No or Wait, but He always answers – in HIS time.

(nearly finished!)

**Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us**

This seems quite difficult. We don't mind asking God to forgive our sins – in fact, we're encouraged to do so

**In 1 John 1:8-9**

*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

God loves us and wants to forgive us. That's why Jesus died in our place on the cross – so that we can be forgiven and start our life again – with a clean slate.  
... and we're not perfect yet, so we need to keep confessing our sins and coming to Him to be forgiven...

**BUT**

the next bit says 'for we also forgive everyone who sins against us – or (in the old way of saying it) 'AS we forgive those who sin against us', so it seems to be conditional...

In the parallel passage in **Matthew 6**, it says:

*<sup>14</sup> For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*

There are some parables about this in the Gospels... the one about the Unmerciful Servant in **Matthew 18**, which comes AFTER

*<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?"*

*<sup>22</sup> Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."*

In other words, ALL THE TIME.

If we want to be forgiven by God, we should be forgiving other people as well.

The Good News is that God has forgiven us a huge amount – all of us have missed His mark of perfection (Romans 3:23) and deserve death (Romans 6:23) but He forgives us if we turn to Him in repentance.... AND show a little love and mercy to those around us.

There's a great example in today's 'Thy Kingdom Come' broadcast ["Day 3: Thanks"] about forgiveness... do have a look [on You Tube and on our Facebook page]: it's about some parents that had lost their son, who was killed after being beaten up and then run over. And then they came to the conclusion that they had to forgive, because it would release them as well as this other guy.

**And Lead us not into Temptation (or 'The time of trial' and some versions have 'but deliver us from evil / the evil one')**

This is related to having our sins forgiven – but not quite.

This is a difficult sentence to interpret.

God doesn't tempt anyone – He TESTS us, yes, but Satan tempts – the world, the flesh and the devil tempts.

In the book of Job, God allows Satan to test Job, In the wilderness, the Holy Spirit led Jesus to be tempted by the devil – so what is this saying?

That we're asking God to keep us away from hardship / from the devil / from things that might harm us?... well, I suppose \_ YES.... but again, we have our part to play in this.

If you have a weakness for Cadbury's Dairy Milk or pork pies ... or anything else, avoid them... We have a certain responsibility as well, but we can ask God to help us. We can ask him to break strongholds that are keeping us captive.

Delivering us from Satan's clutches is something that was done at the cross, but he will keep having a go. The war is over, but he's still in his death throes – so we need to be alert and resist his temptations.

He has been defeated, though. We need to remember that – and that we are asked to *“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”* (James 4:7)

We have authority over satan because of the blood of Jesus, if we know God as our Father.

Praying that God will deliver us from the evil one and from the time of trial is a good thing to pray, but we need to keep alert and recognise when Satan is trying to lead us astray... and Submit to God instead of him.

We could add the end bit that is sometimes included in the Matthew 6 version of this prayer. It reminds us that God's is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, which is what we mentioned at the beginning.

Coming into God's presence starts with praise and adoration – magnifying His Holy Name – and finishes with the same.

There are many acronyms to teach us to pray:

P Pause, Praise

R Rejoice

A Ask

Y Yield

A Adoration

C Confession

T Thanksgiving

S Supplication

They remind us to put God first, to come to Him in adoration and humility. To worship Him for who He is and what He's done... and to ask Him to change us to be like Him.

So as we pray the words of the Lord's Prayer, let's remember that he is our Father, but he's also God Almighty, and that we want his Kingdom to come in our lives. Let's pray:

*Our Father in Heaven*

*hallowed be your name,*

*your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.*

*Give us today our daily bread.*

*Forgive us our sins,*

*for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.*

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*

*For the Kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,*

*Now and For Ever*

*Amen*

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